

**SIEC Recommendations in Response to
DPS Request for SIEC Input on
MOU Policy for NGO access to AIRS MOUs**

BACKGROUND and SCOPE

Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) requested recommendations from the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) on a policy regarding access to AIRS by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The PSIC Office met with DPS to review its request and researched possible approaches.

The current AIRS Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the purpose of AIRS as:

“These radio frequencies are to be used in the event of a multi-agency, multi-discipline, and/or multi-jurisdictional operation requiring the use of the common state radio channel(s), specifically for the purpose of coordinating activities during identified incidents.”

The current AIRS Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes eligibility as follows:

“AIRS is designed to provide interoperable communications capability to first responders of police, fire, and EMS agencies, as well as other personnel of municipal, county, state, tribal, and federal agencies performing public safety or public service activities. DPS may also determine that selected non-governmental organizations (NGOs) performing public safety or public service activities are eligible for approval to use AIRS.” (From section 1.2 of the AIRS SOP)

Note: The AIRS MOU is primarily an FCC licensing instrument and therefore it requires a direct agreement between DPS (the licensee) and the signing agency. As a result, an NGO can not be included under an existing MOU with a Public Safety Agency.

PSIC presented the results of its discussions and research at the October SIEC meeting. Based on feedback from the SIEC, PSIC has refined the draft SIEC recommendations as stated below.

Recommended Procedures

Request Review Procedure

Upon receipt of a request by DPS from an NGO of an AIRS MOU:

Step 1: DPS may require the requesting NGO to present express written support from a government agency that is responsible for emergency management planning for its jurisdiction to the effect that the NGO is “performing public safety or public service activities warranting

**SIEC Recommendations in Response to
DPS Request for SIEC Input on
MOU Policy for NGO access to AIRS MOUs**

them to be given access to use of the common state radio channel(s) specifically for the purpose of coordinating activities during identified incidents”.

Note: The jurisdiction of the government agency supporting the NGO’s access to AIRS must match the geographical area for which the NGO is requesting AIRS usage.

Step 2: DPS may request concurrence from the SIEC, through its NIMS-CU Workgroup, in the event that the role of the NGO warrants, in DPS’ judgment, additional review.

Step 3: DPS as licensee shall be responsible for making the final decision regarding whether or not to sign an MOU with any NGO.

Withdrawal Procedure

The supporting government agency may withdraw their support of an NGO’s use of AIRS by informing DPS and the NGO in writing at any time.

Once the supporting agency’s support is withdrawn the AIRS MOU will be voided by DPS and the NGO must promptly discontinue use of AIRS.